

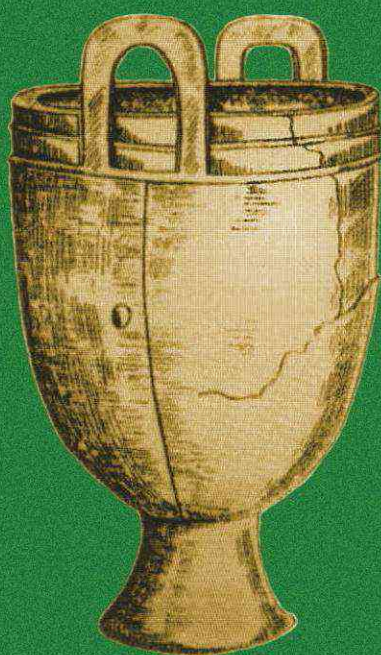
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## THE HISTORICAL ROLE OF THE GOLDEN HORDE IN THE SILK ROAD AND IN EASTERN EUROPE

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**Abstract.** The term Golden Horde and the other designations needs further research to find the historical correct name for the north western *ulus* of the Mongol empire. Batu and his brothers became the greatest power within the Mongol empire and they decided to seat the Toluyid Möngke to the throne of the Great Khan. The Black Death brought fundamental changes, the Golden Horde survived it for another century. The age of the Golden Horde represent the dominance of the nomads in Eastern Europe after th Huns and Khazars. The Golden Horde was destroyed by Moscow principality which was the base for the Russian conquest of the Eurasian steppe. The historiographical concept of the Russians and modern successor state-nations of the Golden Horde had to be revised devoiding the rewriting the history of the Golden Horde from modern national point of view.

**Keywords:** Ulus, Orda, Batu, dominance, nation-building, Khan.

Golden Horde is a misleading term used by the Russian chroniclers from the 16<sup>th</sup> century and it designates the north-western successor state of the *yeke Mongghol ulus* ‘Great Mongol Empire’ which was adapted in modern historiography<sup>1</sup>. However the sources used the terms *Kök Orda* ‘Blue Horde’ and *Aq Orda* ‘White Horde’ as the eastern and western wings of the north-western successor state of Chinggis’ realm<sup>2</sup>. It is widespread to use the term *ulus* ‘appanage’ from the common patrinomy of the ruling house founded by Chinggis Khan. The term *ulus* of Jochi ‘Jochi’s realm’ means that Chinggis Khan’s eldest son Jochi was assigned the western region of the empire, the Irtysh valley. As Jochi died before his father, his sons inherited his *ulus*: the eldest son Orda, the second son Batu and the other 12 sons. The *ulus* of Orda represented the eastern half of the Jochids, while the *ulus* of Batu the western half. However the *ulus* of Shiban is also

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<sup>1</sup> Hammer-Purgstall introduced the term [6]. The Golden Horde is also ambiguous, as it may refer to the whole territory of the heirs of Jochi from Irtysh to Danube or to the *ulus* of Batu including the territory between the Volga/Ural and the Danube.

<sup>2</sup> Recently Uskenbay suggested that the Blue Horde was the Ulus of Orda and the White Orda was the Ulus of Shiban [15, pp. 355–382].

mentioned. Geographically the northwestern successor state is called *Dasht-i Qipchaq* 'Kipchak Steppe'. Finally the Khanate of Kipchak is also in use denoting the dominant Kipchak population of the region. It is time to admit that the designation of this successor state is obscure and further studies are needed to find a correct name for the state-formation which played an important role in the history of Central Eurasia/Silk Road and Eastern Europe.

The *ulus* of Jochi was the territory between the Irtysh and Ural rivers, i.e. Kazak steppe before 1235. It was divided among the sons of Jochi. The Jochid princes of the eastern half were headed by Orda and those of the western half by Batu. Ögedei after the conquest of the northern China convoked a *quriltay* in 1235 to discuss the matter of western campaign against the powers of Eastern Europe adjacent to the *ulus* of Batu. So Batu was appointed as commander of the western campaign and among others, Güyük and Möngke later great khans and the genius general Sübetei accompanied him. The army under Batu conquered the Volga Bulgaria, the Kipchaks, the Rus' principalities, the Alans and attacked the Hungarian Kingdom in 1236–1242. The western campaign came to an end due to the death of Ögedei at the end of 1241<sup>3</sup>. Batu became a ruler of a vast territory from the Danube to Yayıq/Ural rivers and even Orda acknowledged him as the actual lord of the *ulus* of Jochi. As for the other sons of Chinggis Khan, Ögedei received Jungaria, Chagatai got Semirechie and Mawarannahr, and Tolui inherited the heartland of the empire. In 1242 the *ulus* of Jochi between the Danube and the Irtysh was the largest comparing the *ulus* of Chagatai and the direct rule of the great khan including eastern Central Asia and northern China. Batu had decisive power in the Mongol Empire, his personal enemy, Güyük was elected as a great khan in 1246 and the clash seemed to be inevitable, only Güyük's death in 1248 prevented the war between them. Then Batu called the *quriltay* in his territory and the Chinggisid princes offered the throne to Batu, who rejected perhaps due to his gout, and Batu nominated the Toluid Möngke which was accepted by the *quriltay* [2, p. 363]. Until the death of Batu in 1255/6 he can be regarded as a co-ruler of the Mongol Empire<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> The description of the western campaign cf. [20, p. 325–352].

<sup>4</sup> Szilvi Kovács called my attention to the data of Rubruq, who visited both the courts of Batu and Möngke in 1254:

XXIII. (4) From the village I have mentioned we went eastward, close to the mountains above referred to, and from that point we entered among the subjects of Mangu Chan, who everywhere sang and clapped their hands before our guide, because he was an envoy of Baatu. For they show each other this mark of honor; the subjects of Mangu receive in this fashion the envoys of Baatu, and those of Baatu the envoys of Mangu. The subjects of Baatu, however, are the stronger, so they do not observe the custom so carefully [J: Baatu's people, however, give themselves rather more airs and are not as careful to observe the practice]. [18, p. 225; 14, p. 138].



[1, p. 204]

Möngke's conquest, the third wave of Mongol wars brought fundamental changes in the balance of power. Hülegü's campaign against the Middle East and Qubilay attack against the Song dynasty led to the formation of the Il-Khanate in Persia, Irak and Anatolia and the Chinese Yuan dynasty. In the 1260-s the four *ulus* became practically independent. The *ulus* of Jochi remained a stabile state in contrast with the Chagataid *ulus*. The Il-Khanate and Yuan dynasty were in close cooperation as both were ruled by Toluids and were put to the attacks of the Chagataids and Jochids. Allsen emphasized that Iran and China were the richest sedentary regions of the Mongol Empire, the Mongol elite moved to sedentary territory and had to find a compromise the local ruling elements to stabilize their rule, whereas the Batuids remained in the steppe and controlled the Russian principalities from there, and finally the Chinese and Islamic worlds represented

XXVIII (18) Then he began his reply: "As the sun sends its rays everywhere, likewise my sway and that of Baatu reach everywhere, so we do not want your gold or silver." [18, p. 251; 14, p. 174].

XXXIV. (5) And he added: "There are two eyes in the head; but though there be two, they have but one sight, and when one turns its glance there goes the other. You came from Baatu, and so you must go back by way of him." [18, p. 299; 14, pp. 237–8].

XXXVII. (6) After that, Baatu caused me to come into his presence, and had interpreted to me the letter Mangu Chan sends you. For Mangu had written to him that if he wished to add, strike out, or alter anything in them, he was to do so. [18, p. 314; 14, p. 257].



the leading civilizations of the medieval world<sup>5</sup>. It means that the Russian principalities belonging to the sphere of Byzantine civilization cannot be compared those of the China and Islamic world in 13<sup>th</sup>–14<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The Black Death in the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century due to the Mongol commercial network became catastrophic for the whole world from China via *ulus* of Jochi to the Middle East and Europe [11, pp. 447–457; 12, pp. 819–834]. The Il-Khanate and Yuan dynasty did not survive the crises, the death of Abu Sa'îd, in 1335, was the fall of the Il-Khanate, while the Yuan capital was captured by the forces of the founder of the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) in 1368 and the last Great Khan and emperor of the Yuan dynasty had to move to Mongolia. The *ulus* of Chagatai and that of Jochi survived the crisis [3, p. 196]. The former revived under the rule of Timur and his successors. The *ulus* of Jochi faced the period of decay and chaos (*bulghaq*) between 1359 and 1380, but the khans from the Blue Horde could lengthen its existence for another century in spite of the devastating campaigns of Timur. In the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century the *ulus* of Jochi disintegrated forming successor states: Noghay Horde, the Great Horde, the Crimean and Siberian khanates, and the khanates of Kazan, Astrakhan and Kasimov and those of the Özbegs, Kazaks.<sup>6</sup> Most of these khanates fell victim of the Moscowite conquests: In 1552 Kazan and in 1556 Astrakhan were conquered by Ivan IV; by 1600 the khanate of Sibir collapsed; Crimea was annexed in 1783, the Kazak Hordes were invaded gradually from 1730 to 1848, whereas the territory of Mawarannahr and Semirechie (Özbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan) were annexed between 1865 and 1868. The legacy of the Mongol Empire was taken by the Russian Empire in modern age conquering and subduing the territory of the *ulus* of Jochi and that of Chagatai, but the territory of Il-Khanate and Yuan dynasty, i.e. Persia and China remained

Empire promoting the commerce between the Caliphate and Northern Europe started to control the communities living in the forest zone to acquire the most precious commodities (furs, honey, wax, slaves). This trade attracted the Rus' to Eastern Europe from Scandinavia. The Rus' centred on Kiev became a great power in the 10<sup>th</sup> century and finally put to an end of the Khazar Empire in 965. However the eastern zone of the Eastern European forest was under the control of a Khazar's successor state, the Volga Bulgars at the Volga-Kama region which embraced Islam in the beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> century and was the centre of trade between the eastern Islamic lands and Northern Europe. After the fall of the Khazar Empire the Kipchaks/Cumans could consolidate the steppe zone by the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century. There was a balance of power between the forest and steppe in the 11<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Mongol conquest upset the balance of power as the Jochids organized the powers of Eastern Europe into a single political unit under Batu. The *ulus* of Jochi disintegrated in the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century and new regional political units emerged in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The shift in balance of power allowed the Principality of Moscow to collect the Russian lands and became a strong new power which made possible to get rid of the Mongol rule. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Russians had the upper hand of these successor states and the steppe had to capitulate.

The interpretation of the history of Jochi's *ulus* is an actual task. Halperin called the attention the importance to study the contemporary Russian sources concerning the attitude to the Tatars. The chroniclers representing the clergy of Orthodox Christianity were hostile to the Tatars/Mongols as the Tatars were pagans or Muslims. The authors of the Russian annals recorded the events avoiding the concept of Tatar suzerainty with the help of using the term custom for the forms of exercising power [5]. The Imperial and Soviet Russian historiography blamed the Tatars for wrecking the economy of Rus' principalities, isolating Russia from Europe, introducing servitude in political life, preventing the modernization of Russia.

After the fall of the Soviet Union new nation-building concepts appeared. The historians of Russian Federation in Moscow and St. Petersburg seem to avoid the former stereotypes and try to form a real picture on the

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## **РОЛЬ ЗОЛОТОЙ ОРДЫ В ИСТОРИИ ВЕЛИКОГО ШЕЛКОВОГО ПУТИ И ВОСТОЧНОЙ ЕВРОПЫ**

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**Резюме.** Термин "Золотая Орда" и другие понятия требуют дальнейших исследований, чтобы найти исторически правильное название Северо-Западного улуса Монгольской империи. Бату и его братья стали создателями величайшей державы в составе Монгольской империи, и они решили возвести на трон великого хана Толуида Мункэ. Черная смерть привела к коренным изменениям, Золотая Орда пережила ее еще на столетие. Эпоха Золотой Орды олицетворяет господство кочевников в Восточной Европе после гуннов и хазар. Золотая Орда была разрушена Московским княжеством, которое стало основой для русского завоевания Евразийской степи.

**Ключевые слова:** улус, Орда, Батый, доминирование, государственное строительство, хан.

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